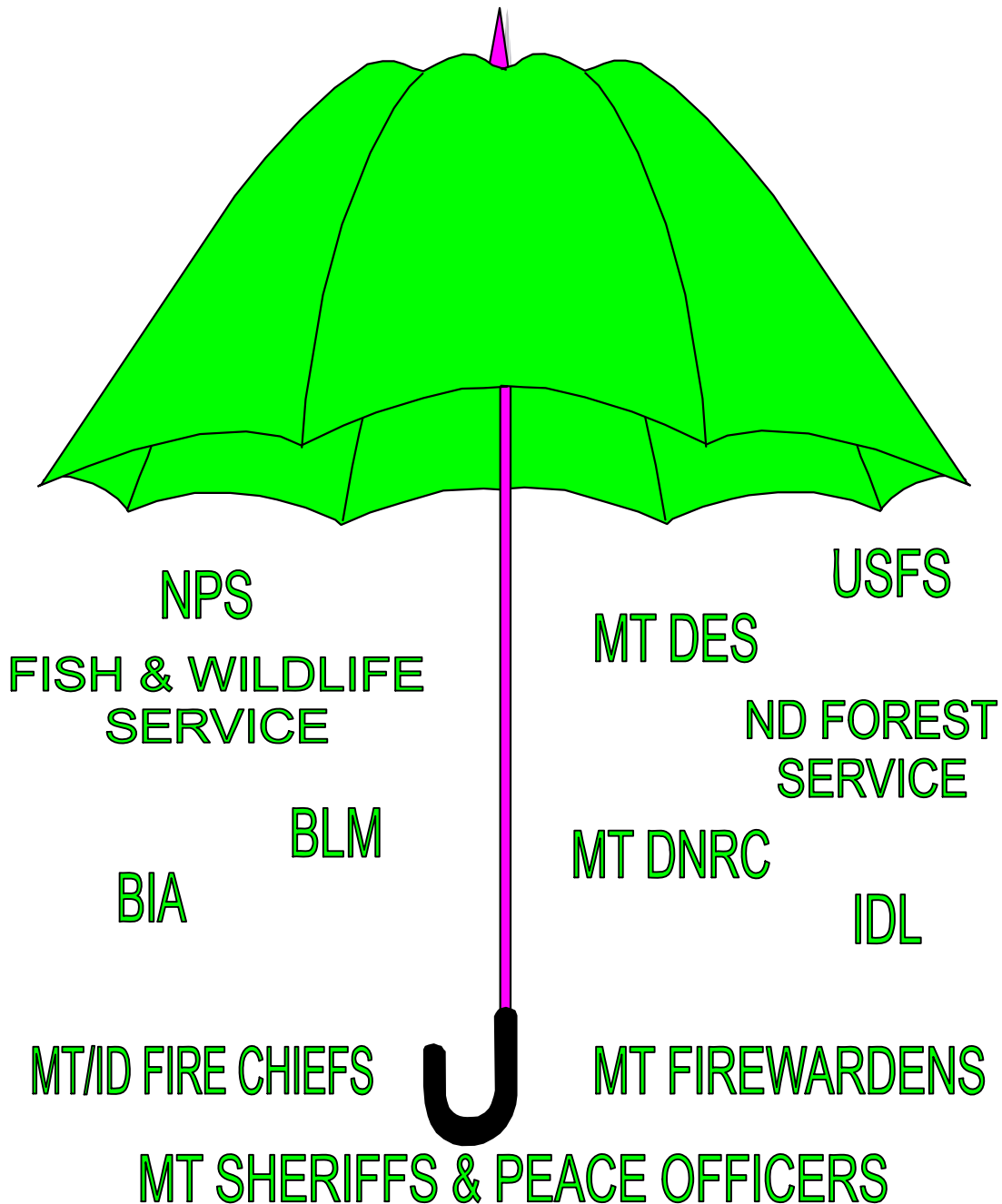


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MOBILIZATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT FIREFIGHTING RESOURCES

MONTANA



May 2007

TABLE OF CONTENTS

MOBILIZATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT FIRE FORCES

	Page
A. Scope.....	1
B. General.....	1
1. Local Government Fire Forces Definition.....	1
2. Apparatus Requirements.....	1
3. Closest Available Resources Concept.....	2
4. “Local Resources” and “Local Standards” Definitions	2
C. Personnel Standards	
1. Physical Fitness Standards.....	2
2. Incident Qualification Cards (Red Cards).....	2
3. Training Standards.....	3
4. Personal Protective Equipment Standards.....	4
D. Equipment Standards	4
1. Fire Apparatus Standards.....	5
2. General Hiring Requirements.....	5
E. Hiring Procedures and Rates.....	7
1. General.....	7
2. Hiring Options: Out of Normal Jurisdiction.....	8
a. Unoperated.....	8
b. Fully Operated.....	8
c. Special Provisions.....	9
d. Other Municipal City or County Government Agencies	9
3. Personnel.....	9
4. Equipment.....	10
F. Guidelines for Hiring and Reimbursement of LGFF Within Their Jurisdiction.....	12
1. Within Jurisdiction.....	12
G. County Co-op Cost Recovery Options.....	14
1. Under County Coop Program.....	14
2. Governor’s Declaration	14
3. FEMA Subgrant.....	15
H. Mobilization Boards.....	15
I. Dispatch and Mobilization Guidelines.....	15

Appendix A Zone Mobilization Boards.

Appendix B Zone Mobilization/Dispatch Map.

Appendix C Montana Mutual Aid Frequency Plan.

Appendix D Montana Structure Protection Protocols.

Appendix E Fully Committed Guidelines.

Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook Chapter 50.

MOBILIZATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT FIRE FORCES
Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation

A. SCOPE

Guidelines in this document apply when Local Government Fire Forces' apparatus, equipment, and personnel are hired by Northern Rockies Coordinating Group (NRCG) agencies within Montana. Initial guidelines were established May 1, 1991.

B. GENERAL

1. The term Local Government Fire Forces in this document refers to:

a. Local Government:

A local government is a county, municipality, city, town, township, public authority, school district, special district, intrastate district, council of governments (regardless of whether the council of governments incorporated as a nonprofit corporation under State law), regional or interstate government entity, or agency or instrumentality of a local government; any Indian tribal government or authorized tribal organization; and any rural community, unincorporated town or village, or other public entity.

b. Local Government Fire Forces:

- 1) County or municipal (e.g. town or city) equipment and personnel,
- 2) volunteer and paid personnel from Local Government Fire Forces, and
- 3) county and fire services organization equipment and apparatus

c. Local Government Fire Forces refers to any fire department (volunteer or paid), rural fire district, volunteer fire company, fire service area, or county rural fire department, organized and administered as per Montana State Law, Title 7 MCA and in this document interchangeable with the term Local Government Fire Forces.

NOTE: If an individual who is a member of a Local Government Fire Force contracts himself/herself or his/her privately owned equipment under a separate agreement, he/she is considered a private contractor and does not fall under any policy or rules pertaining to Local Government Fire Forces.

2. All fire apparatus must meet the requirements of the resource order and the guidelines set forth in the Northern Rockies Coordinating Group (NRCG) Supplement to the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook (IIBMH).

a. All Local Government personnel hired by NRCG agencies for use on incidents must meet the minimum standards for training, experience, personal protective equipment (PPE), and physical fitness specified in this document.

- b. All Local Government Fire Force fire apparatus (engines, water tenders) hired by NRCG agencies for use on incidents must meet the equipment typing standards set forth in this document and NRCG Supplements to the IIBMH.
3. The "closest available resources" concept (i.e., mobilization of the closest/most expedient resources available to an incident, regardless of agency administrative boundaries) will be followed whenever practical. Local firefighting resources (government or private) will be used to the fullest extent practical; however, Agency resources may be mobilized instead of private contractor resources in certain circumstances to handle a specific need (i.e., tactical, monetary, and/or training considerations).
4. "Local Resources" and "Local Standards" refer to resources and standards within a County or Local Government Fire Force's jurisdictional area.

C. PERSONNEL STANDARDS

1. Physical Fitness Standards

The following physical fitness standards apply to all firefighters hired by DNRC for use by NRCG agencies.

Beginning January 1, 1998, the Work Capacity Test became the national standard and will be used by Montana DNRC to measure job-related work capacity. The Step Test and the 1-½ mile run will no longer be used to establish aerobic fitness scores. The National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) publication **Work Capacity Test Administrator's Guide** (PMS 307) NFES #1109 outlines the policies and procedure for the work capacity test. This document supersedes the previously published Work Capacity Tests for Wildland Firefighters: Test Administrator's Guide, USDA F.S. 1998, (9851-2810-MTDC).

A download of the guide can be found on <http://www.nwcg.gov/pms/pubs/pubs.htm>

It is highly recommended that those individuals who have or suspect they have a serious medical condition consult their personal physician before practicing or taking a Work Capacity Test. **ALL INDIVIDUALS** should complete the revised DNRC Health Screening Questionnaire (HSQ) and Informed Consent for Work Capacity Test documents.

NOTE: Personnel dispatched to structure fire fighting assignments must also meet structure fire fighting guidelines for training and personal protective equipment (PPE). Please see 3(c) and 4(b) below.

2. Incident Qualification Cards (Red Cards)

DNRC will not issue Red Cards to Local Government below the level of Strike Team/Task Force Leader or Unit Leader positions. The chief officer of each Local Government Fire Force is responsible for certifying that Local Government firefighters meet NWCG, NRCG, NFPA, or appropriate standards for the positions in which they are operating.

NRCG maintains the following website where Training Providers can locate information necessary to conduct training to NWCG standards. In addition the website will list Training Providers who have MOUs with NRCG.

http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/fire/nrcg/Training_MOU/training_providers.xls

NOTE: NRCG agencies may verify compliance by checking qualification cards or Chief's certification for all local government firefighters they hire.

3. Training Standards

- a. Local Government Fire Forces utilized within their own jurisdiction are responsible for meeting local standards. "Local Standards" are the minimum physical fitness, experience, training, and equipment standards, recognized within their county or jurisdictional area.
- b. All firefighters hired by DNRC for use by NRCG agencies on wildland fires, and all structural firefighters assigned to structure fire fighting duties on wildfires, must have completed a minimum of DNRC's Basic Wildland Firefighter or an equivalent course recognized by NRCG (e.g., I-100, S-130, and S-190), and the "Annual Fireline Safety Refresher RT130" course or equivalent. The 2006 revision of DNRC's "Basic Wildland Firefighter" meets the Standards for Survival requirement and the NFPA 1051 Firefighter I level.
- c. All firefighters hired by DNRC for use by NRCG agencies, assigned to NWCG Type I or II engines, must be at a minimum certified as Firefighter I or equivalent (NFPA Standard 1001) and pass the NRCG approved Physical Fitness Test at the "light" level. The chief of the fire department can attest to the individual firefighter's ability to perform at the NFPA FF1 Training Standard 1001 level by certification on the red card or certifying the DNRC-provided form. The MSU Fire Services Training School certificate for NFPA FF1 Training Standard 1001 will meet this certification requirement.

NOTE: Firefighters assigned to NWCG Type III, IV, V, VI, or VII engines for exterior structure protection do not need NFPA Firefighter I certification or equivalency.

- d. All Type III - VII engine orders must have a qualified engine boss. It is the POLICY of the DNRC and NRCG that Local Government Fire Forces hired by the DNRC will be fully qualified per the NWCG "Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System Guide (PMS 310-1, January, 2006) as certified by the Local Government Fire Chief/Officer."
- e. Each position has a minimum training requirement. Certification for personnel and equipment as per supplements to the Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook and Mobilization of Local Government Guide. In addition, all firefighters must have completed an NRCG-approved physical fitness test.
- f. Water Tender and Water Truck personnel as well as the Wildland Engine (Type III-VII) personnel position required training, experience, physical fitness, and EFF classification can be found on page 13 & 14, Chapter 50 of the IIBMH handbook.
- g. DNRC will maintain training and experience records for Local Government personnel at and above the 300 level: Strike Team/Task Force Leader and Unit Leader positions. Training and experience records below this level are to be maintained at the local level by the chief officer and provided to the county/regional Qualification Card (red card) Coordinator if the position is staffed. The local DNRC office may maintain these records as needed.

4. Personal Protective Equipment Standards

- a. All firefighters hired by DNRC for wildland fire suppression will be equipped to meet DNRC's standards for personal protective equipment. Local Government Fire Forces are responsible for supplying personal protective equipment to their firefighters. If DNRC, or another NRCG agency, issues protective clothing and equipment to local government personnel and these items are not returned to the issuing agency, the cost will be deducted from any payment to the corresponding local agency.

All wildland firefighters must meet wildland fire protective clothing standards as described in DNRC's Wildland Fire Suppression Manual (DNRC 900 Manual) or NFPA 1977 as a minimum: fire shirt, fire pants, gloves, leather boots with 8" top and traction soles, as well as an approved helmet, are required.

Issuance and use of fire shelters shall be in accordance with guidelines set forth in DNRC's Wildland Fire Suppression Manual (DNRC 900 Manual).

- b. All firefighters (assigned to NWCG Type I or II engines) hired by DNRC for use in structural fire fighting must each have a full complement of appropriate personal safety clothing and equipment (e.g., turnouts, SCBAs) as described in NFPA Standards 1500 and 1971. The chief officer of each Local Government Fire Force is responsible for ensuring their firefighter safety clothing and equipment meet these standards.

NOTE: Structural Firefighters should also include a set of wildland PPE as well as the above when assigned to structural firefighting on wildland fire incidents.

NOTE: DNRC manuals may be accessed at DNRC offices or on the DNRC Fire and & Aviation Management website.

D. EQUIPMENT STANDARDS

When classifying equipment, all of the requirements for both equipment and personnel, set forth in this chapter and NRCG supplements to chapter 20, IIMBH, must be met to be acceptable. Equipment lacking certification especially by not meeting the minimum requirements shall be used only when certified equipment is unavailable. Personnel not meeting the minimum requirements shall not be used

The basic and advanced equipment inspection workshops sponsored by the NRCG Equipment Committee cover the necessary safety systems, the mechanical soundness, compliance with transportation safety rules, laws and other codes. Compliance with applicable standards, rules, regulations, laws and other codes is the responsibility of the Local Government Fire Force.

1. Fire Apparatus Standards

- a. Wildland Apparatus: Per NWCG Standards, referenced in the NWCG Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook 2 (IIMBH), Type III, IV, V, VI, and VII engines are to be dispatched with a minimum crew complement. All wildland apparatus must carry a specified minimum complement of equipment per NWCG standards.
- b. Structural Apparatus: Per NWCG Standards, referenced in the NWCG Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook 2 (IIMBH), Type I engines require a

four-person crew, and Type II engines are to be dispatched with a minimum of a three-person crew. All water tenders are to be dispatched with a single person crew.

All structural fire apparatus will be typed according to current NRCG guidelines, and must meet the following standards:

- 1) Engines (Type I and II) must be in compliance with NFPA Standard 1901, 2003 Edition. A four-person engine, Type I engine crew will consist of a Driver/Operator, a Company Officer and two Firefighters. A three-person engine, Type II engine crew will consist of a Company Officer/Engine Boss, Driver Operator, and one Firefighter.
- 2) Water tenders should be in compliance with NFPA Standard 1901, chapter 7, 2003 Edition. As a minimum, water tenders must meet the specifications (typing standards and complements) described in the NRCG Supplement Chapter to the Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook.

NOTE: NRCG recommends use of NWCG Type I or II engines only when there is an adequate water source available to supply them.

ADDITIONAL NOTE: All new apparatus purchased after January 1, 2004 must be in compliance with NFPA 1901, 2003 Edition. Truck Companies, Mobile Water Supply Apparatus, and Engines have all been combined under this new NFPA standard. It is not intended that NFPA 1901, 2003 Edition be applied retroactively to existing apparatus. However, if major retrofits are made to or multi-role capabilities added to an existing piece of apparatus, it is suggested that the apparatus be brought into line with this standard as closely as possible. Apparatus built before January 1, 2004 which meets the applicable NFPA standard for when it was built and also meets any additional requirements imposed by this document shall be acceptable.

2. General Hiring Requirements

Local Government Fire Forces should work with their local DNRC office to obtain the certifications prior to the core period of the fire season. Procurement officials during time of emergency situations are under no obligation to set up or make special arrangements to have a government fire expert available to do an inspection or certification. Inspections are not mandatory, but recommended, and will be done at the Chief's request to DNRC.

Equipment will be hired on the DNRC Incident Rental Agreement (IRA). Equipment must meet the accepted typing standards set forth in the NRCG Supplement to the Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook. The NRCG Equipment Committee may sponsor equipment inspection workshops as needed to provide training regarding equipment inspections, updates, and standards.

All equipment shall be within the limits of the manufacturer's Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) when fully loaded (including operators and accessory equipment). This includes balancing the load in a manner that all axle weights comply with the manufacturer's gross axle weight rating. Equipment shall be configured in a manner that the center of gravity of the vehicle is within the design limits of the equipment.

January 1, 2004 was established as the date when all water tenders and water trucks must meet the GVWR requirements when fully loaded. Fill limiting devices ***are not*** allowed after January 1, 2004. All types of equipment must meet the requirements for GVWR, set forth in

NOTE: NWCG type ratings for fire equipment are based on the capacity the vehicle is capable of carrying in accordance with the Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) and not the capacity of the tank. The GVWR capacity of the vehicle, as well as the other listed minimum requirements, will establish the resource type for determining the contract rate of payment.

It shall be the individual NRCG member agency and individual Local Government Fire Force's responsibility to determine whether their equipment complies with the GVWR. Individual agency equipment provided to other member agencies shall comply with the GVWR. The providing agency shall be responsible for determining GVWR compliance. Operators shall possess the skill, knowledge, and ability to operate the vehicle within the constraints of GVWR.

All personnel are to be in a seated, belted position within an enclosed cab.

The driver of each apparatus is to be properly licensed. According to Montana Code Annotated (MCA) 61-1-134, "the following vehicles are not commercial motor vehicles: a vehicle exempt from taxation, used for firefighting, and bearing Montana tax-exempt plates."

The driver of any vehicle meeting the above mentioned requirements would not be subject to the Commercial Drivers License (CDL) law.

Local Government Fire Force fire apparatus responding to or returning from a fire emergency are exempt from the definition of Commercial Motor Vehicle Carrier under Montana law and driver/operators may not necessarily have Commercial Driver's Licenses.. However, Driver/Operator training should meet or exceed applicable NFPA standards as certified by the Chief Officer or his designee

Those who do not meet the above mentioned requirements, and operate a "commercial" vehicle, would still be required to have a Commercial Drivers License. The Local Government Fire Force will be responsible for providing proof of liability coverage for the equipment, in accordance with Montana State Law. The State will not provide liability insurance for equipment owned by Local Government entities. Drivers of Local Government Fire Forces equipment shall possess a commercial driver's license (CDL) or have the knowledge, skills and abilities for the type and class of equipment operated. The chief officer of each Local Government Fire Force is responsible for certifying that local government firefighters have the knowledge, skills and abilities for the type and class of equipment operated, as described in this mobilization guide. Certification of drivers will be made using the "Certification for Local Government Fire Forces Equipment and Operators" form. This form is required for all equipment requiring a commercial driver's license (CDL) and is available on the website at:

<http://www.dnrc.mt.gov/forestry/fire/business/forms.asp>.

No payment will be made for the equipment unless the driver is certified by the chief officer and listed on this form. Updates to the form can be made as needed. The form will be kept on file at each local land or unit office and submitted with the final payment package.

E. HIRING PROCEEDURES AND RATES

1. General

All payment for Local Government Fire Force equipment is transacted through DNRC. This billing and payment procedure includes equipment assigned to agency fires. Those Fire Departments with which the BLM contracts for a specific fee to provide initial attack on BLM lands are exempted. The bulk of this equipment consists of fire engines, water tenders, support vehicles, and related equipment.

Payment of an hourly rate has been established for all equipment, per the NRCG Supplement to the NWCG Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook. The "fully operated" rates are used in specific instances for Local Government Fire Forces who cover their own payroll, worker's compensation and other benefits. The "unoperated" rates are used for Local Government Fire Force equipment when the Local Government Fire Force chooses not to utilize the "Fully Operated" rate.

DNRC will provide an Agency Representative with dispatch of Local Government Fire Forces to DNRC or Federal support fires, or a County Fire Advisor to county assist fires, when deemed necessary by the fire Incident Commander or the Land Office responsible for the fire. Agency Representative and County Fire Advisor duties and responsibilities are defined in the DNRC Wildland Fire Suppression Manual (DNRC 900 Manual).

Emergency Firefighter Time Reports, Crew Time Reports, Emergency Equipment Shift Tickets and supporting documentation will be filled out, a copy retained at the incident, and the signed original packet returned with the designated representative when demobilized. This designated representative would normally be the Engine Boss, Strike Team Leader or Crew Boss. Any questions should be directed to the local DNRC Land or Unit Office. Packets should be submitted to DNRC within one month of the demobilization date.

All Local Government Fire Forces dispatched to a fire should be accompanied by a packet of paperwork consisting of the following:

- Resource Order
- Crew Time Report – SF-261
- Emergency Firefighter Time Report – OF-288
- Fire Crew Performance Rating – SF-372
- Employers First Report of Notice of Occupational Injury and instructions
- DNRC Incident Rental Agreement – OF-294 and OF-294 General Clauses to IRA, and NRCG Supplemental Terms and Conditions to the OF-294 General Clauses
- Emergency Equipment Use Invoice – OF-286
- Vehicle Heavy Equipment Inspection Checklist – OF-296-If applicable.
- Emergency Equipment Shift Ticket – OF-297
- Emergency Equipment Inventory Checklist
- Emergency Equipment Fuel and oil Issue – OF-304
- State of Montana Vehicle Accident or Loss Report

In the event that this packet is not provided, contact the local dispatch office or the local DNRC office. Equipment and personnel that are not previously signed up with DNRC, or a cooperating Federal agency, can be signed up locally by filling out the appropriate paperwork and forwarding it to the local DNRC Land Office for payment. All Federal fire agency officials have been advised to send unsigned Local Government Fire Force paperwork back to DNRC for action, but the option to sign up on the fire remains. If hiring on the fire, contact the responsible Land Office.

All incomplete paperwork (i.e., I-9s not completed) will be returned to the using agency.

2. Hiring Options: Out of Normal Jurisdiction

Local Government Fire Force resources may be hired in one or more of the following ways. Each option requires a separate agreement. One piece of equipment may be hired on more than one IRA if the Local Government Fire Force wishes it to be available on both an unoperated and fully operated basis. Procurement officials on incidents should consult the hiring Land Office for more information regarding specific agreements.

Local Government Fire Force equipment must be hired fully operated (option b) or under a separate agreement (option c), and operated by Local Government Fire Force employees, not EFFs, in order to be eligible to accept assignments outside the Northern Rockies Geographic Area.

a. Unoperated:

Under this method, Local Government Fire Force personnel will be hired as EFFs, temporary employees of the State of Montana, and the equipment will be hired on an IRA at the unoperated rate as listed in Chapter 50, IIBMH. IRAs for Local Government Fire Force engines and water tenders hired unoperated are not valid outside the Northern Rockies Geographic Area; this fact shall be stated on the IRA in block 14, Special Provisions. Local Government Fire Force equipment hired on an unoperated basis is not eligible to accept assignments outside the Northern Rockies Geographic Area.

EFFs hired and/or dispatched as single resources may accept assignments in region and out of region. During travel to an incident, single resource EFFs might operate passenger vehicles (i.e.: pickups, sedans) belonging to a Local Government Fire Force, a private individual, or DNRC. In the case of a Local Government Fire Force or private passenger vehicle, if the vehicle is not specifically ordered on the Resource Order for use on the incident, it will be considered to be providing transportation to and from the incident only, and will be paid mileage at applicable DNRC rates. Reimbursement for mileage must be requested through a DNRC travel reimbursement voucher. If the vehicle is ordered on the Resource Order for use on the incident, it must be hired on an EERA at the applicable unoperated rate as listed in Chapter 20 NRCG supplement. EFFs may also be hired as single resources to staff DNRC engines.

b. Fully Operated

Under this method, Local Government Fire Force personnel are not hired as EFFs, they remain Local Government Fire Force employees; the personnel and equipment are paid at fully operated rates as listed in the NRCG supplement to Chapter 50, IIBMH. Local Government Fire Forces hired fully operated are responsible for their own payroll costs, including taxes and workers compensation insurance, as required under state law. Local Government Fire Force equipment hired on a fully operated basis is eligible to accept assignments outside of the Northern Rockies Geographic Area. Montana DNRC remains the hiring and payment agency for Montana Local Government Fire Forces on out of region assignments.

c. Special Provisions

At DNRC's local Area Land or Unit Office's discretion, an exception may occur when salaried or union fire departments elect to provide their normal payroll and contract their services to DNRC. This is acceptable (with confirmation of Worker's Compensation coverage) and may be a more agreeable way of meeting the requirements of collective bargaining. Under these circumstances, the Local Government Fire Force will bill DNRC for the unoperated rate for the equipment plus normal payroll, including overtime, for permanent employees, per an MOU or other agreement executed between the DNRC Land Office and the Local Government Fire Force or its county fiscal personnel. Questions regarding such an agreement should be directed to the hiring Land Office.

d. Other Municipal City or County Government Agencies

Resources from other Municipal City or County Departments or Divisions may occasionally be ordered through the national dispatch system and hired by DNRC. Preferred hiring method is fully operated at the Local Government Fire Force equipment rates listed in Chapter 50, IIBMH. If equipment is hired unoperated, operator may be hired as State EFF at applicable rates as listed in EFF Pay Plan in NRCG Supplement to Chapter 10, IIBMH. These resources will be hired under option c.

3. Personnel

Local Government Fire Forces' personnel may be hired as EFFs independent of Local Government Fire Force equipment and be dispatched as single resources. These individuals may accept assignments in region and out of region. EFFs may be assigned to any position they are redcarded to perform under 310-1.

Pay rates for local government firefighters hired as EFFs is based on the qualification for the duty position assigned. Trainee positions shall be paid one pay grade below. For current pay rates see EFF pay plan, Chapter 10, Section 13.6, Exhibit 04 of the NRCG Supplement to IIBMH or on the web at:

http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/fire/nrcg/Committees/business_committee.htm

The following documents must be completed and kept on file at the responsible Land Office / Unit Office for each EFF employee hired. These forms are available from DNRC Unit Offices, Land Offices, and the following website:

<http://www.dnrc.mt.gov/forestry/fire/business/forms.asp>

- Emergency Firefighter Employment Form.
- W4 – Employee Withholding Allowance Certificate.
- Decedent's Warrant - Must be fully completed, including SS numbers and dates of birth.
- Employment Eligibility Verification (IRCA Form I-9) - If possible, a photocopy of the documents reviewed should be included.

- Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS) Optional Membership Election - This carbon copy form is not available on the above website. It must be obtained from a DNRC land office or from DNRC Payroll in Helena. The original must be submitted for processing.
- Membership Card - Public Employees' Retirement System - This form is only required if the EFF elects to be a member of PERS on the Membership Election form above.
- Statement of Selective Service Registration Status.
- Confirmation of Receipt of DNRC Policies by EFFs.
- SSA-1945 Statement concerning your employment in a job not covered by Social Security.
- Incident Behavior Form.
- Certification for Local Government Fire Force Equipment and Operators.

For EFF hiring procedures, see IIBMH chapter 50 or on the web at:

http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/fire/nrcg/Committees/business_committee.htm

4. Equipment

Acquisition of fire apparatus and equipment from Local Government Fire Forces will follow the procedures established by the State of Montana. All rates and responsibilities have been established between the State of Montana and representatives of the Local Government Fire Forces. Therefore, renegotiation at incidents should be avoided. If there are compelling reasons for renegotiation, the responsible Land Office must be involved in the negotiations.

The rates set forth have been negotiated to reflect using the equipment for per hour per day. While it is recognized that occasionally this will be exceeded, using agencies should attempt to work within this limitation.

Standard method of hire for incidents with in Northern Rockies Region

Unoperated rate: personnel hired as DNRC EFFs. Use equipment hourly rate. Fuel and oil will be provided by the using agency. Repairs and normal maintenance will be the cooperator's (Local Government Fire Force's) responsibility.

For those Local Government Fire Forces whose personnel are hired as DNRC EFF employees and covered by State Workers' Compensation Insurance, equipment will be hired at the unoperated rate.

Both Engine Rates-Montana Local Government Fire Forces' Equipment Hired Unoperated and Water Tender Rates-Montana Local Government Fire Force Equipment Hired Unoperated are listed in Chapter 50 of the IIBMH.

When five or more Local Government Fire Forces' resources are dispatched to an incident, the DNRC may furnish a Technical Specialist to assure the departments are signed up properly. The Incident Management Team may order a Technical Specialist if desired. The DNRC agency-specific name for this position is County Fire Advisor, with an acronym of CFAD. This person works for the Incident Management Team and is commonly housed in the Finance Section. This person is responsible for coordinating with the Incident Commander and the Command and General Staff on matters pertaining to resources (equipment and personnel) and in some cases jurisdictional responsibilities of Local Government Fire Forces associated with the incident and assists in the day-to-day operations with the Local Government Fire Forces. The CFAD recommends corrective actions for deficiencies noted with the Local Government Fire Forces' personnel or equipment.

Position Responsibilities (CFAD):

- Advise the Agency Administrator, Incident Business Advisor, and the IMT of the area Local Government Fire Forces' jurisdictional responsibilities, including mutual aid responsibilities.
- Review contract specifications (such as: Operating Agreements, MOUs, IA Agreements, and/or DNRC Incident Rental Agreements) regarding pay (equipment and personnel).
- Review business management activities to assure compliance with legal and fiscal requirements and efficient use of resources. Includes property management, law enforcement, and civil rights.
- Prepare a checklist of items that the Finance/Administration Section Chief (FSC) and the IMT need to be aware of - include terms and conditions of operating plans or agreements.
- Review job responsibilities and assignments for Local Government Fire Forces personnel.
- Monitor local jurisdictional agency responses in meeting jurisdictional responsibilities.
- Attend incoming briefing with the IMT if possible; make contact with the FSC.
- Attend planning sessions and make known the availability of Local Government Fire Force resources, i.e., length of commitment, rotating personnel, and impacts to local government operations.

- Through the Finance/Administration Section Chief (FSC), provide information on use of equipment and personnel. Coordinate with the Logistics Section Chief (LSC) to identify problem areas for the Local Government Fire Forces such as interaction with the IMT and logistical support.
- Coordinate with the FSC and the LSC to assure timekeeping and recording is being completed. Provides assistance to appropriate personnel on timekeeping, commissary, travel, accidents, injuries, personal problems or emergencies and other administrative needs.
- Check for compliance with equipment specifications, certification, engine typing, and Federal Excess equipment use guidelines.
- Ensure safety, personal protective equipment, other equipment, and actions of the Local Government Fire Forces' personnel are consistent with approved standards.
- Assist the IMT in providing for the well being and safety of assigned Local Government Fire Forces' resources.
- Assist the IMT in the demobilization (if necessary) of Local Government Fire Forces' resources.
- Provide direction for distribution of pay documents.

F. GUIDELINES FOR HIRING AND REIMBURSEMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT FORCES WITHIN THEIR JURISDICTION

1. Within Jurisdiction

To qualify for payment within its legal jurisdiction, not including severity, the local government force must be fully committed (the situation has surpassed the jurisdiction's capabilities and all firefighting resources have been exhausted) and have exercised all mutual aid resources. This will vary by county, by timeframe, resource availability, activity level, and jurisdictional commitment and is to be determined by the local DNRC Area/Unit involved.

When Local Government Fire Force resources are dispatched to an incident within their legal jurisdiction, *volunteer* Local Government Fire Force personnel may be hired as EFFs and paid for their time commencing 24 hours after the first initial attack resources are dispatched, unless otherwise designated in the local Annual Operating Plan (AOP), beginning with the time of dispatch from the respective dispatching center. EFF rates of pay are determined by the ICS position or nature of the EFF work assigned. (See Chapter 10, Section 13.6, Exhibit 01 Pay Plan for the current ICS position titles and EFF pay plan.) Hiring documentation for Local Government Fire Force personnel is the same as for other DNRC EFF personnel; see Section 3 above for information on hiring documentation for DNRC EFFs. These documents should be completed preseason and copies kept on file at the hiring DNRC Area Land or Unit Office. Documentation must include either current red cards or signed certification by the Local Government Fire Force chief officer.

Local government equipment will not be hired when the incident occurs within its legal jurisdiction, but approved operating supplies (fuel, oil and foam) may be covered beginning

24 hours after the initial attack resources are dispatched. Repairs and normal maintenance will be the Local Government Fire Force's responsibility.

In areas of DNRC Direct Protection with overlapping jurisdiction, the Local Government Fire Forces may be reimbursed for their expenses as needed and/or hired within the first 24 hours on an incident, if specifically provided for in the Annual Operating Plan (AOP), Initial Attack (IA) Agreement, Mutual Aid Agreement (MAA) or other formal contract.

The DNRC Area or Unit office or incident management team will complete the Crew Time Report – SF-261, Emergency Firefighter Time Report – OF-288, Emergency Equipment Fuel and Oil Use Issue – OF-304, Emergency Equipment Shift Ticket – OF-297 and Emergency Equipment Use Invoice – OF-286 for payment.

Pre-suppression availability may be approved when the planning level requires a measured increase of the available resources required to respond in a timely manner to avert loss to life and natural resources. Local Government Fire Forces may be provided pre-suppression severity reimbursement within their jurisdiction when the Local Government Fire Force is clearly performing the DNRC's mission. Rates are included in Chapter 50 of the IIBMH and have been negotiated between representatives of the Montana County Firewardens Association, the Montana Fire Chiefs Association, and DNRC.

Hiring the appropriate number of Local Government Fire Force personnel (EFFs) to staff a fire station to be prepared to respond to a wildland fire incident that is within DNRC's jurisdictional responsibility (PL 4 or 5) is an option. The Local Government Fire Force personnel will be in pay status for the duration of the period they are performing DNRC assigned duties. The apparatus must have a pre-existing IRA and will be reimbursed as per IIBMH. In this scenario, these individuals may be available to respond to incidents other than wildland fires that are within the Local Government Fire Force's responsibility, providing that the Local Government Fire Force and DNRC have agreed on a plan that clearly outlines items such as notification, backfill, and ensures the individuals are removed from pay status for the duration of these types of incidents.

Local Government Fire Force resources (personnel and equipment) may be hired to bolster DNRC capabilities when pre-suppression severity availability will be reimbursed (as per Chapter 50 of the IIBMH) providing these resources are under the control of the DNRC and are performing DNRC's mission. These resources may be released to respond to incidents that are the responsibility of the Local Government Fire Force. The DNRC may backfill with other available resources and has no responsibility to rehire the Local Government Fire Force.

NOTE: DNRC is not authorized to make payments directly to local government fire service organizations. Per Montana Code Annotated (MCA 17-8-311), "All payments made by a state agency to any city, town, county, or local government entity must be payable to the finance officer of the appropriate city, town, or county."

Personnel certifications and qualifications will be in accordance with NWCG Chapter 20 supplements to the IIBMH and NWCG 310.0 established minimums. NWCG 310.1 information can be found at <http://www.nwcg.gov/pms/docs/docs.htm>. National direction is for agencies to accept each other's standards. In some circumstances the Chief Officer of the Local Government Fire Force can certify that provided resources have the knowledge, skills, and ability to perform at those same levels.

The incident commander will determine the priority of demobilization of resources subject to direction of the appropriate line officer(s).

G. COUNTY CO-OP COST RECOVERY OPTIONS

1. County may request fire suppression assistance under the terms of the State/County Coop Fire Agreement.
 - County resources must be fully committed within their jurisdiction and retain command or enter unified command (the county should provide a line officer or line officer representative).
 - County commissioners verbally contact local DNRC Land Office to request assistance under the agreement.
 - County Commissioners submit a formal letter to State Forester requesting assistance and support within 48 hours following verbal request.
 - County is responsible for their costs with in county.
 - County is responsible for any costs accrued through Mutual Aid Agreements.
 - DNRC will be responsible for eligible resources ordered outside of the county.
 - DNRC will be responsible for eligible resources ordered within the county provided that they are autonomous of county government or those resources fall within the 2007 guidelines for payment of Local Government Fire Forces within their jurisdiction, and DNRC finds it in its best interest to reimburse within those guidelines.
2. County may request Governor's declaration for reimbursement of eligible county fire suppression costs.
 - County requested assistance through DNRC via State/Co Coop program, which established the beginning of eligibility period.
 - The county invokes the emergency 2-mill levy.
 - County requests Governor's declaration for reimbursement of eligible county fire suppression costs through DES.
 - DES administers oversight and distribution of state emergency funds to requesting county.
3. County may request a FEMA fire management assistance sub grant through the State.
 - State must meet threshold costs.
 - DNRC, on behalf of and in cooperation with the county, submits fire management assistance grant application to FEMA.
 - County submits sub grantee application (FEMA Form 90-133, Nov 02) to state within 30 days of closure of incident period.
 - If the DNRC grant is approved the county, as subgrantee, would be eligible for reimbursement of 75% of eligible costs.

H. MOBILIZATION BOARDS

Each geographic area has established a "Zone Mobilization Board", based on the five NRCG geographic zones in Montana (see Appendix A: MAP - Zone Fire Mobilization Boards). Each Zone Mobilization Board consists of at least one representative from the respective DNRC Land Office, a member of the Montana Fire Chiefs Association, and a member of the Montana Firewardens' Association for each geographic area. Mobilization Boards allow a Dispatch Zone to use a system approach to dealing with government mobilization of resources that works for their particular area. Two options are (a) a formal mobilization board that meets at specified times and with structure, or (b) can form a board on an as-needed basis if the need arises from conflict or need to accomplish the purposes stated below. A statewide Mobilization Board with similar representation has also been created.

1. Purpose

- a. Make contact with firewardens/fire chiefs in each county in the geographic area to keep them informed of fire activity state-wide.
- b. Establish drawdown plans for local resources based on fire danger within the geographic area.
- c. Assist the Land Office, Dispatch Centers, Zone Support Centers, and the Northern Rockies Coordination Center (NRCC) in determining availability status for local resources available for assignments out of the jurisdiction(s). This includes assignments to another dispatch zone or assignments outside the Northern Rockies geographic area. (see Appendix B: MAP - Zone Mobilization/Dispatch System). The board should assist the dispatch center with the establishment of a dispatch rotation that provides for the fair and equitable mobilization of government resources for assignments outside the local jurisdiction. At times, this may require a Mobilization Board representative to work in a dispatch center as a liaison or agency representative.
- d. Assist the Land Office fire coordinator in mobilization of local resources.
- e. Serve as a point of contact for firewardens in each mobilization zone and to help deal with state and local fire situations, issues, and concerns.
- f. Represent Local Government Fire Forces on Zone MAC Groups.

I. DISPATCH AND MOBILIZATION GUIDELINES

1. Initial Attack

- a. Unit/District Dispatch
- b. 911 Center
 - City Fire
 - Rural/Volunteer Fire
- c. Initial Attack Zone
 - Interagency Dispatch

2. Extended Attack

- a. Zone Support Center - Geographic Area
 - Zone Drawdown Plan
 - Out of Zone and Out of Area Dispatch Rotation
 - Zone Dispatch Rotation

3. Type I and II Incidents

- a. NRCC Zone Geographic Areas
- b. Expanded Dispatch

4. In-State Fires

- a. Each Land Office, through their Interagency Dispatch/Zone Support Center, will inform the Duty Coordinator at the Northern Rockies Coordination Center (NRCC) when:
 - 1) DNRC becomes involved in a County incident with potential for the county to submit a formal request for State assistance or
 - 2) An incident DNRC is involved in with the potential to develop into a Type I or II incident.

Interagency Dispatch/Zone Support Centers will also report fire activity via the daily (F- 300 form).

- b. The closest available resources will be utilized whenever possible.
- c. Local Government Fire Forces are to be dispatched within each Interagency Dispatch/Zone using the principle of closest available forces to meet the time frames specified by the request and using procedures established by the zone mobilization board. If local resources are not available, the Interagency Dispatch/Zone Support Center should contact their dispatch “neighbors” as defined in the Northern Rockies Mobilization Guide; 21.2 ORDERING PROCEDURES. If neighborhood resources are not available, the request will be placed with the Northern Rockies Coordination Center.

Mobilization of Local Government Resources in the Eastern Zone:

- Miles City Dispatch Center contacts the Eastern Land Office (Miles City, Montana) for ELO County Resources.
- Lewistown Dispatch Center contacts the Northeastern Land Office (Lewistown, Montana) for NELO County Resources.
- Billings Dispatch Center contacts the Southern Land Office (Billings, Montana) for SLO County Resources.

If Local Government Resources are not available through the Eastern Land Office, Northeastern Land Office, or Southern Land Office, Billings Dispatch Center should:

- 1) Contact their neighboring dispatch centers to see if neighboring zone resources can be made available.
 - 2) Contact the Northern Rockies Coordination Center and place the resource request.
- d. It is the joint responsibility of each Interagency Dispatch/Zone Support Center, Zone Mobilization Board, and member organization (Federal, State, Local Government, and private) to maintain and report the availability status of firefighting resources. Resources may be reported available for assignments:
- 1) Local only,
 - 2) Within the Northern Rockies Geographic Area , or
 - 3) National Dispatch.

Land Offices and their corresponding Interagency Dispatch/Zone Support Centers are responsible to arrange with the appropriate county/local authority for the use and dispatch of these resources.

- e. Local resources should be utilized first from the closest county, until all available resources have been exhausted. At that time, local firefighting resources are to be drawn from the next closest county. Resource drawdown should be on a "closest available" basis.
- f. Under the "fill-or-kill" concept, confirmation that a resource order can be filled must take place within a reasonable time from receipt of the resource order by the receiving dispatcher. This will vary with the date and time of need for the resource(s), and the availability of the next-closest resource(s).

5. Fires in Adjacent States and Eastern Washington State:

- a. The Duty Coordinator at the NRCC should determine which County(ies) is (are) closest to an incident and then contact the corresponding Dispatch Center or Zone Support Center. That Interagency Dispatch/Zone Support Center is responsible for determining the availability of Government Forces and private contractors, and determining their availability and arranging for their use on fires. For Local Government Forces in the Eastern Zone, Billings Dispatch Center can contact the Miles City Dispatch Center, Lewistown Dispatch Center, and the Southern Land Office of the DNRC.
- b. The "closest available resources" concept is to be used in the same manner as with in-state fires.

6. Fires in Non-Adjacent States (to Montana):

- a. The NRCC will place orders for local resources to be used on incidents in non-adjacent states through the Interagency Dispatch /Zone Support Centers. Billings Interagency Support Center can contact the Miles City or Lewistown Dispatch Centers. For local resources from the Southern Land Office of DNRC, Billings Support Center can contact the Southern Land Office:

Coordination of local firefighting resources is to be done at the Interagency Dispatch/Zone Support Center level for NRCG agencies within that Zone and done in concert with the DNRC Fire & Aviation Management Bureau for State Compact requests.

- b. The NRCC will follow the closest forces method for contacting Interagency Dispatch/Zone Support Centers to determine availability of firefighters and equipment from local agencies and contractors.

7. Fires in Canada

- a. Northwest Compact Ordering Procedures and Payments

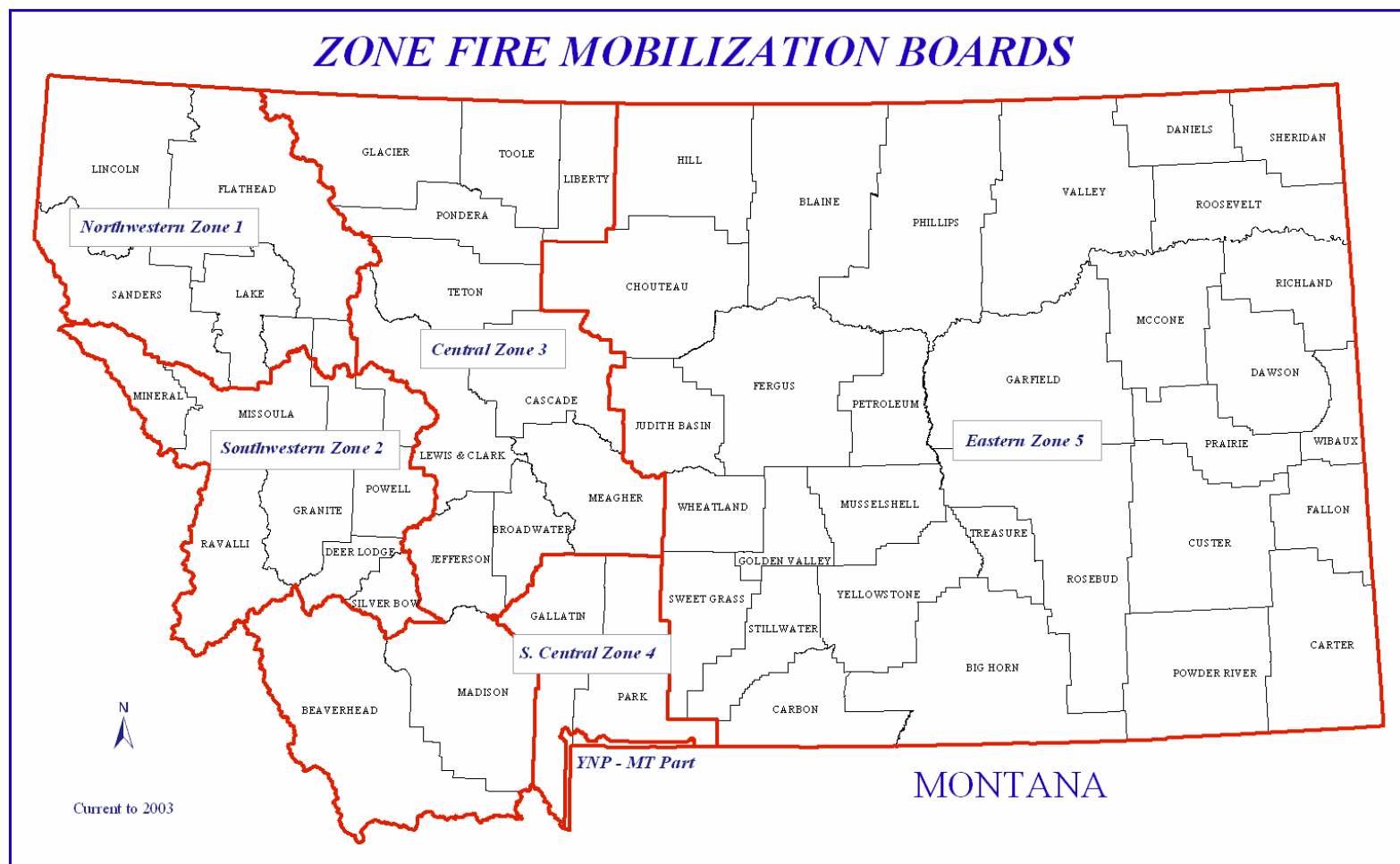
The Northwest Compact is an agreement between three provincial wildfire agencies in western Canada (Yukon, British Columbia and Alberta) and five state wildfire agencies in the northwestern United States (Alaska, Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Montana).

The compact is an operational agreement to provide greater flexibility in the exchange of firefighting resources and information, between the eight member agencies, outside established mobilization agreements. The State of Montana will be the lead agency for ordering resources under the Northwest Compact. All resources will be ordered through the Northern Rockies Coordination Center.

Payments for resources ordered under the Northwest Compact will be the responsibility of the State of Montana. Federal agencies will reimburse the State for any resources ordered by the State under the Northwest Compact and used on federal fires. All orders will be documented on a resource order.

APPENDIX A

Zone Mobilization Plan Boards



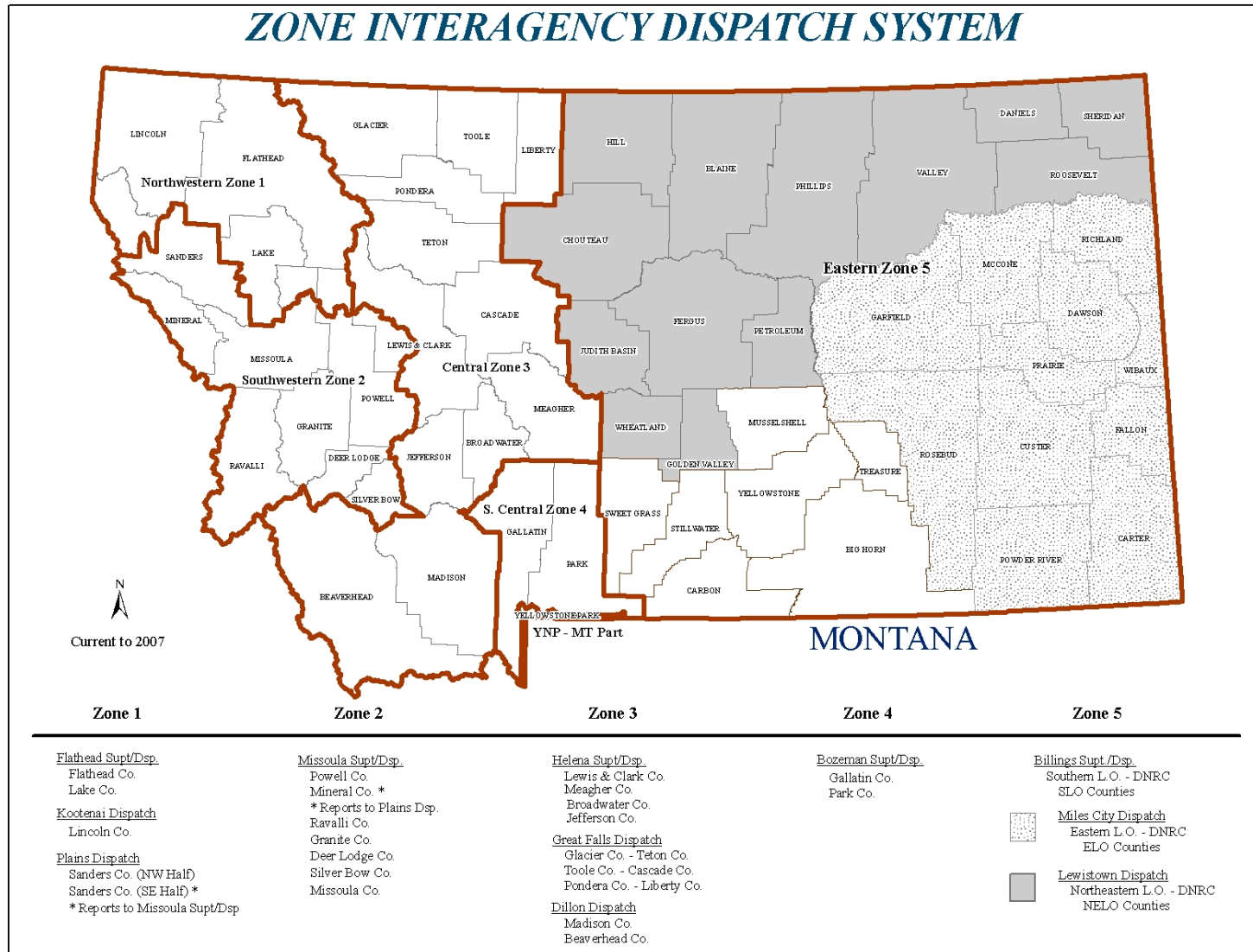
Zone Fire Mobilization Boards

	State Board	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 5
DNRC Representative	Doug Williams	Walley Bennett	Terry Vaughn	Greg Archie		Darrell Kurk Jerry Buhre
Firewarden Representative	Brett Waters	Randy Sutton	Scott Waldron Mike Doto Alt		Bob Fry	Steve Wilkins
Fire Chief Representative	Jess Mickelson	Mark Peck Marc McGill Steve Stanley Bill Nagili	Scott Waldron -Alt Mike Doto	.	Brett Waters Bryan Connelly Alt.	Rich Cowger
Contractor Representative			Cal Alsbury	Duane Turk John Bennett	Joe King	

APPENDIX B: MAP

Zone Mobilization/Dispatch System

ZONE INTERAGENCY DISPATCH SYSTEM



APPENDIX C

Montana Mutual Aid Frequency Plan

MONTANA MUTUAL AID FREQUENCY PLAN

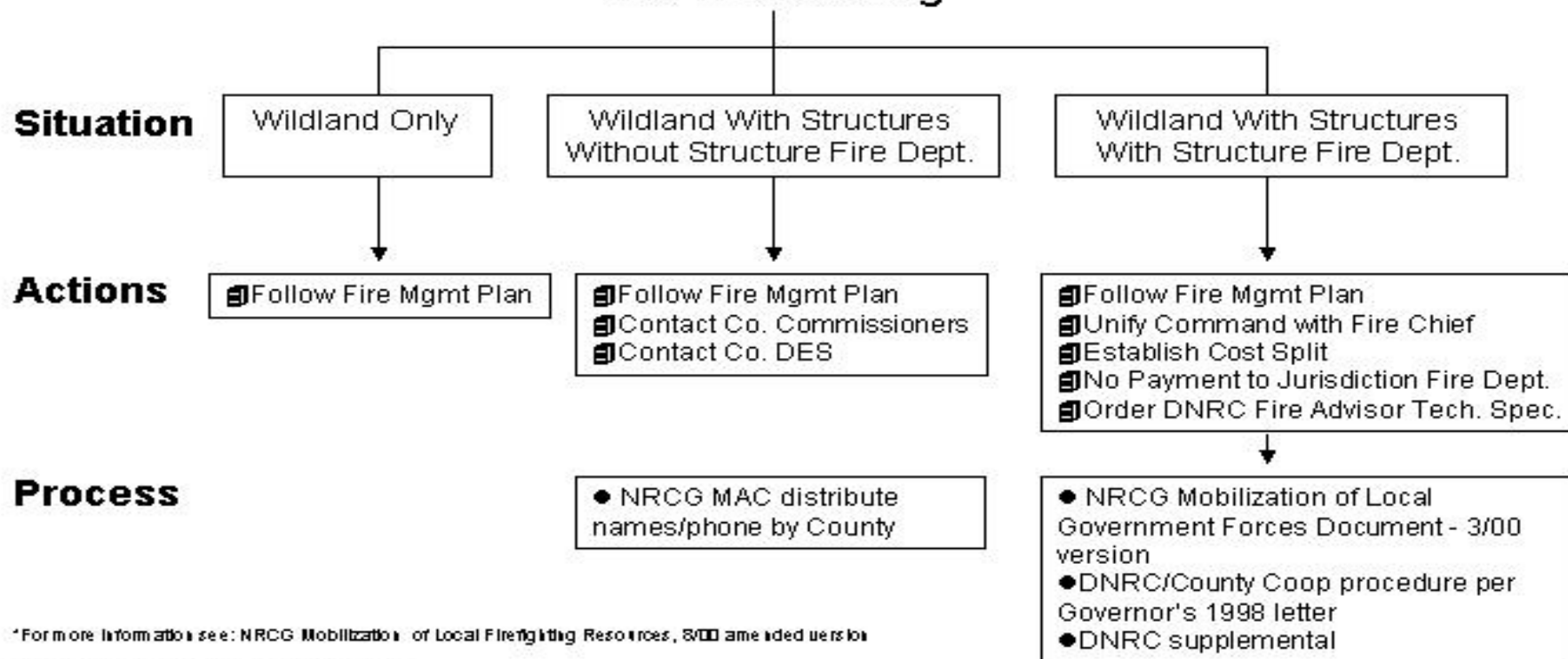
		LOCAL CHANNEL	COLOR NAME	FREQUENCY (MHz)	NAME
M O N T A N A	Mutual Aid Frequencies		Gold	153.905	State Common Mutual Aid
			Red	154.070	State Fire Mutual Aid
			Maroon	154.280	State Fire Command and Control
			Coral	154.265	State Fire Ground #1
			Scarlet	154.295	State Fire Ground #2
			Ruby	153.830	State Fire Repeater
A	Common Frequencies		Garnet	159.345	State Fire Repeater Control
			Brown	155.820	State DES
			Yellow	151.220	Fire & Aviation - DNRC
			Orange	151.400	Fire & Aviation - DNRC
			Green	171.475	U.S. Forest Service Common

APPENDIX D

Montana Structure Protection Protocols

NRCG MAC
Direction to IMT's and Agency Administrators

*Montana Structure Protection Protocols Fire Threatening



*For more information see: NRCG Mobilization of Local Firefighting Resources, 8/00 amended version

Structure Suppression Technical Specialists:

- Type 1 Engine Crews (Single Resource Boss, Driver/Operator, Firefighter, Firefighter)
- Type 2 Engine Crews (Single Resource Boss, Driver/Operator, Firefighter)
- Structural Water Tenders (2 each Driver/Operator)
- Truck Crews

8/2/00

Northern Rockies Coordinating Group

STRUCTURAL FIRE PROTECTION

August 11, 1999

ABSTRACT

In an effort to facilitate implementation of the federal wildland fire policy as it relates to structure protection issues, the following consensus statements and recommended procedures are provided to NRCG agencies.

The question of who is responsible for structure protection in a wildfire situation and who pays for it is important. Each incident is unique. There are few "canned" answers to the structure protection questions. Incident commanders and agency administrators will have to make decisions based on the conditions of each incident. There are several criteria that have to be considered in making these decisions but only the incident managers and agency administrators can determine how these criteria apply to the specific incident circumstances.

CONSENSUS STATEMENTS

- ***Life and Improved Property Protection*** -- a service with the primary responsibility to protect the structure AND the people that occupy these structures from injury or death. This fire protection service is normally provided by rural and/or local government fire departments, with specially trained and equipped personnel. After life safety, the priority is to keep the fire from leaving the area of origin. It also means protecting the structure from an advancing wildland fire. Various taxing authorities fund this service. (The equipment and training required to conduct life and property protection is not normally provided to the wildland firefighter.)
- ***Structure Protection*** -- to protect the structure from the threat of damage from an advancing wildland fire. This normally does not include an attack of fire that is inside the structure. It involves the use of fire control lines (constructed or natural) and the extinguishment of spot fires near or on the structure. This protection can be provided by both the rural and/or local government fire department firefighter and the wildland fire protection firefighter. This does not include an interior attack of fire that is in the structure. It involves the use of standard wildland protection tactics, control methods, and equipment, including fire control lines and the extinguishment of spot fires near or on the structure.
- ***Wildland Fire Protection*** -- a service with the primary responsibility of protecting natural resources and watersheds from damage by wildfires. State and federal forestry or land management and some local government agencies normally provide wildland fire protection with specially trained and equipped personnel. Various taxing authorities and fees fund this service. (If a fire protection agency is routinely called upon to fight wildland fires, they are usually trained and equipped to do so. The problem arises when personnel from an agency are called upon to fight fires for which they are NOT equipped or trained.)

- **Structure Fire Suppression** is defined as interior or exterior actions taken to suppress and extinguish a burning structure or improvement associated with standard structure fire protection, equipment, and training.
- Structure fire suppression is the responsibility of local government entities, although there are some locations in the Northern Rockies Geographic Area where there is currently no structural fire agency in place.
- Federal and state fire agencies, as a general rule, do not have the authority, training nor equipment to engage in structure fire suppression actions. Two agencies (NPS and BIA) have limited capability and authority to conduct structure suppression operations related primarily to buildings owned or protected upon lands administered by those agencies. Certain tribal entities may have additional capability and authority on tribal lands.
- Federal and state fire agencies with wildland fire protection authority and capability can and will **support structure fire suppression** operations within their jurisdictional areas of wildland protection. **Support** is defined as applying water, foam or retardant in an exterior attack only (ground or aerial delivery) on a burning structure or other actions such as hauling water or pumping operations. No interior attack can be conducted (NPS/BIA tribal exceptions).
- Federal and state agencies with wildland fire protection authority and capability can and will provide **structure fire protection** on wildland fires both on or off of lands administered or protected through agreements by those agencies. The distinctions made here recognize a closest forces concept on all wildland fires, a resource ordering system that dispatches fire personnel and equipment to other jurisdictions and agreements that exchange fire protection responsibilities among cooperators. Included are mutual aid provisions to support one another and preplanned dispatch protocols that move agencies resources between jurisdictions. In that regard, all participating agencies will take safe and appropriate tactical suppression actions to keep a wildland fire from igniting structures or improvements. Suppression actions include both direct and indirect methods of perimeter control and spot fire extinguishment. Conversely, a structure or vehicle fire that has potential to escape to wildland fuels can and will be attacked in a safe and appropriate manner consistent with the capabilities of the agencies personnel and equipment.

To clarify any misconceptions, federal and state wildland agencies will engage in structure protection activities as part of the normal suppression actions taken on wildland fire. The new fire policy has not changed what can or cannot be done. The only clear instance of not providing such protection is if it is unsafe to do so.

Who pays for structure protection activities is affected to some degree by fire policy. It is the long-term intent of the wildland fire agencies to have in place agreements and operating plans that clearly define protection responsibilities and jurisdiction related to structures. Since few such written agreements and operating plans are in place, the following guidance is provided:

- During an initial attack incident the agency with wildland fire protection responsibility should bear the costs of personnel and equipment utilized to suppress the wildland fire which includes structure protection resources ordered by that agency. If a local government entity with structure fire jurisdiction and responsibility (in Montana, a rural fire district, a

municipal fire department, or a fire service area) desires to increase the level of protection, a "you order you pay" philosophy should prevail.

- Implement a unified command under the ICS system as soon as possible to assure onsite agreement as to what is ordered by whom and who pays. For mutual aid or a preplanned dispatch, "who pays" should have been determined in advance and documented in the operating plan.
- During an extended attack incident that involves structure protection issues and/or multiple jurisdictions/boundary fires, utilize agency representatives or a unified command structure to agree on site who orders what and who pays. Consider establishment of a single ordering point and develop a written cost share agreement to document these decisions.
- On project size fires, include all structure protection issues and "how to handle" in the delegation of authority. Utilize unified command or fully qualified agency representatives to assure joint decision-making is integrated into incident control objectives, strategic and tactical implementation actions, and ordering processes. A written cost share agreement will be utilized to document apportionment decisions. Order technical specialists for assistance in developing agreements and utilize local fire officials in preparing and implementing structure protection plans.

GUIDELINES

In summary and to further assist agency administrators, local incident commanders and incident management teams, the following guidelines and criteria are provided for incident decisions:

1. Wildland fire agencies have primary responsibility for fire suppression within their protection area. Wildland fire agencies have a responsibility to prevent a wildfire from spreading into areas of structures and to assist the jurisdictional fire agencies in protecting structures from advancing wildfires.
2. Local government agencies (in Montana and North Dakota: rural fire districts, municipal fire departments and fire service areas; in Idaho: local fire organizations) have primary structure responsibility within their defined jurisdictional areas. Under normal circumstances, local agencies should not be reimbursed for performing their responsibilities within their jurisdiction.
3. Local agencies may be reimbursed by the wildland agencies when performing beyond their responsibilities or outside their jurisdiction, as determined by the incident commander/agency representative.
4. Use existing agreements, operating plans and established ordering procedures to order structure protection resources.
5. Incident resources, whether reimbursed or at no cost, incur support costs (food, lodging, fuel, tools, etc.) that must be considered and documented in the development of any cost share agreement.
6. The management of any wildfire that burns or threatens the protection area of more than one fire agency (Federal, State, or local fire agency--including fire protection districts) will include these other agencies in the incident management. This is accomplished

through participation as a unified incident commander or as an agency representative or a coordinated delegation of authority between affected jurisdictions.

7. One agency cannot financially commit another agency (Federal, State, County or District) without the knowledge and consent of the committed agency.
8. Agencies responding to requests for assistance need to know, at the time of dispatch, if the cost of their response will be reimbursable or free to the requesting agency. Incident commanders, as well as requesting and responding agencies (through dispatch centers) must communicate and document the basis for payment of resources requested for the incident.
9. Cost share agreements should be used to document apportioned costs. (Note that Local Governments are not signatories to the six party agreement, and thus not bound to participate in cost share agreements.)

APPENDIX E

FULLY COMMITTED GUIDELINES

COOPERATIVE COUNTY FULLY COMMITTED GUIDELINES

“Fully Committed” is a term used in relation to the buildup of county-committed resources (equipment and personnel) to a wildland fire incident within that county, in preparation to asking for State assistance. Montana’s counties contain a wide spectrum of capabilities, which makes developing a one-size-fits-all, inclusive statement defining when a county is fully committed all but impossible. Most Land Offices, and some of their Co-op. Counties, find themselves having to make this judgment several times per year. Following are some general guidelines highlighting aspects of the State/County Cooperative Fire program as they pertain to commitment levels, as well as a “tickler” list to aid a Land Office representative, and the County’s representative, in making this determination.

The first thing to understand is that a county provides the necessary wildland fire protection afforded through the State/County Co-op. Fire program with a system of firefighters (primarily volunteers) from various Rural Fire Districts, Fire Service Areas, Volunteer Fire Companies, and County Rural Fire Departments. These Guidelines recognize the duty and responsibility of these same fire organizations to continue to provide standard and adequate fire protection within their respective legal jurisdictions, even during a county-wide wildland fire incident. Further, it is understood and accepted that any policy encompassing all possible situations is unrealistic and acknowledges that the merits of a request for state assistance must be jointly assessed and evaluated by the Incident Commander(s), the County Firewarden (or another county representative acting for the County Commissioners), and the assigned DNRC representative, on a case-by-case basis. County-wide mutual aid agreements, mapped initial attack and fire protection areas, and fire department drawdown plans are some of the aids that need to be available, and annually updated, to allow this group to assess the capabilities of a particular county. Signed mutual aid agreements with adjoining counties are valuable tools a county can use to maintain their ability to respond to all legally mandated incidents. When, or if, these out-of-county mutual aid resources enter a paid status after State assistance is given is dependent solely on the judgment of the assigned DNRC representative and is covered in the Mobilization of Local Government Fire Forces document.

Following is a list of some things that the County should consider doing prior to a wildland request for State assistance:

- **Department(s) with jurisdiction are committed presently, and for the duration of the incident.**
- **Other divisions of county government are committed as necessary:**
 - **County Road Department.**
 - **Law Enforcement.**
 - **Search and Rescue (S&R).**
 - **Disaster and Emergency Services (DES).**

- **Mutual Aid resources within the county are utilized as per annual operating plan(s):**
 - **Drawdown plans implemented.**
- **All DNRC equipment on loan is committed to incident(s) or other initial attack responsibilities.**
- **County equipment and personnel are committed to incident(s) or other initial attack responsibilities as appropriate.**
- **Signed Mutual Aid Agreements with adjoining counties, state agencies, federal agencies, or other fire jurisdictions invoked as necessary. Knowing these other agencies might be committed to their own incident(s), this listing is offered for consideration when reasonably available.**
- **Consideration given to invoking the County 2-Mill Levy, per 7-33-2209 MCA, and/or**
- **Consideration given to invoking the County 2-Mill Levy, per DES 10-3-405 MCA. The County usually has to declare emergency or disaster in this case.**

While most incidents unfold in a linear fashion, starting small and growing larger in a predictable manner, some do not. Weather, fuels, and other factors can cause an incident to grow exponentially, from small to complex, in a very short time. Sustained high fire dangers, Haines Indexes 5+, Lightning Activity Levels (LAL's) of 5, Burning Indexes (BI's)/ Energy Release Components (ERC's) above the 90th percentile, and other large incidents in the county or state could cause an emerging incident to progress past the point of possible containment with the county's resources, or lower the potential for the county to respond adequately. (In cases such as this, the decision time to involve other cooperators and seek State assistance will naturally be compressed. In these cases, it may not be possible to use the above criteria to judge "fully committed.") Also, as fire season conditions worsen, some pre-planning of the State assistance process needs to occur. Several forms of State assistance may be given to a county, before an "official" request is processed, in order to keep an incident from becoming "project" size, after which time an incident becomes very dangerous and expensive. For example, mutual aid response by DNRC resources, the use of retardant or other resources/supplies which the counties don't have access to, should be considered if conditions warrant. It might help to set up some "trigger" points understood by all parties when such actions would occur. The State/County Co-op Fire program attempts to strengthen the initial attack capabilities of a county's fire forces by having the State (DNRC) provide training, equipment, and help in organizing fire protection. The State additionally provides, on an "as needed" basis, technical assistance in the form of County Fire Advisors, fixed and/or rotary wing air support, or other non-traditionally provided resources. In turn, the County agrees to initial attack all fires on State and private land within the county which are not otherwise protected. The County maintains responsibility for all such county fires, even after the request for State assistance has been approved. The County remains as a Line Officer, in consultation with the local DNRC Land Office representative overseeing the State's involvement. The County can delegate authority for specific tactical and support operations needed to mitigate an incident, but final responsibility rests with the

County. The County must also maintain a presence throughout the incident(s) duration. At some agreed point after the incident's containment and control, the County will be expected to take back operational control of the incident until it's declared out. This point will be jointly agreed to by the I.C., the DNRC representative with authority, and the County Firewarden (or another representative acting for the County Commissioners). State involvement after this point will again be at the discretion of the local DNRC Land Office in consultation with the County Firewarden.